

with no hope in sight of regaining their former jobs because their workplaces were destroyed.

For the region, the economic devastation is on par with the effects of the Great Depression. At that time President Roosevelt asked for a National Industrial Recovery Act with which the government put millions of people back to work rebuilding the country's infrastructure. That is what the hurricane-demolished region needs today. The people of the region who have lost their livelihoods should be given a preference in hiring for the Federal dollars spent, and the Federal dollars should be conditioned on local hiring targets.

But this is not a New Deal administration. Instead of leveraging Federal tax money to put people back to work, this administration is content to send Halliburton billions of dollars in no-bid contracts.

SALUTING THE NATIONAL GUARD

(Mr. POE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. POE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to thank and salute those members of the National Guard for the tremendous efforts they put forth in Hurricane Katrina relief efforts. They have tirelessly devoted their time and energy working around the clock to support neighbors, Americans who have been affected by this unfortunate devastating event.

Altogether, there are over 45,000 National Guard personnel on the ground or aboard ships supporting the massive relief efforts that continue to take place. Members of the National Guard have provided widespread search and rescue, evacuation, medical support. They braved the dangers of flood waters and have been faced with unimaginable situations to evacuate over 50,000 people and rescue 11,000 from hotels, rooftops, and floating debris.

I want to specifically commend and thank the 155 members of the 8th Brigade of the Texas National Guard. Under the command of Colonel Donald Petrash, the 8th Brigade is stationed at 12 different shelters helping evacuees from Louisiana in southeast Texas.

Mr. Speaker, the National Guard and Reservists are vital to our communities especially during these times. This is just another reminder that we must never forget about our citizen soldiers.

THE RESPONSIBILITY OF CONGRESS

(Mr. DEFAZIO asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. DEFAZIO. Mr. Speaker, today Congress will vote to borrow \$51.8 billion as a down payment on the relief, rescue and recovery effort, a sum which could reach \$200 billion.

It is the responsibility of this Congress to oversee the administration's

disbursement of these funds and to make certain it goes to the victims and appropriate expenditures and not disaster profiteering. Likewise, Congress must safeguard against opportunists, some even in our own ranks, who would use the disaster for their own petty political ends.

In fact, in light of the huge costs, the big run-up in the deficit that we are about to see, some on the other side of the aisle are suggesting this makes the case for tax cuts for the wealthiest investors in America, those who earn more than \$300,000, have estates worth more than \$6 million. They say that those tax cuts will provide economic stimulus that will trickle down on the people of New Orleans and Mississippi.

They have been trickled on more than they can stand. We need an appropriate, compassionate, and cost-effective recovery effort, not more tax breaks for the most privileged among us who were not affected.

HURRICANE KATRINA

(Mr. FOLEY of Florida asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. FOLEY. Mr. Speaker, I would like us all to tone down the rhetoric and start thinking of the victims. I watched Cokie Roberts yesterday, a proud Democrat, from one of the legendary Democratic families of this Nation, on Fox News, not casting aspersions, not seeking to blame anybody. She had personal tragedy in that they had lost their homes. But she was calm and considerate and thoughtful and reasonable, asking us to come together as a Nation to help the victims of this hurricane.

We have other leaders going on TV calling the President dangerous. After 9/11, we joined hands and prayed. We were considerate, courteous, and, most important, we were Americans. We had four hurricanes in Florida, so I know what it is like to be damaged by a storm.

What is worse after this event is the damaging words of our colleagues disparaging the institution, disparaging the President, and bringing shame on this House. Our victims and our families deserve better.

AN ADMINISTRATION IN DENIAL

(Mr. MENENDEZ asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. Speaker, since Hurricane Katrina struck the Gulf Coast, the Nation has gotten used to hearing an administration in denial. Two nights ago, Congress got a firsthand view when six Cabinet members came before the House of Representatives and described a picture-perfect Federal response to Katrina. But as Americans have watched the tragedy unfold on their television screens, they

learned to differentiate rhetoric from reality. The sad, yet unmistakable, truth is that the Federal Government failed the people of the Gulf Coast, both in the years before the hurricane and in the days after it. The American people get it; but, unfortunately the administration does not.

This is not a time for finger-pointing or political posturing. Neither is it a time to stick our heads in the sand and pretend that the government has performed admirably. It has not, and the administration should stop pretending otherwise.

The stakes are too high to continue heading along this road without asking how we got there. The President needs to explain to the American people why we can trust this same team to adequately deal with the crisis that continues to face millions and cost billions. Congress needs to establish an independent commission to ensure that the American people learn the truth. We simply cannot afford any more mistakes.

FUNDING TO REBUILD AFTER HURRICANE KATRINA

(Mr. PENCE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. PENCE. Mr. Speaker, Katrina breaks my heart. When I consider its tragic aftermath, the ancient parable comes to mind: "And the rains descended and the flood came and the winds blew and beat against the house and it fell with a great crash."

For most American families, when a tree falls on your house, you tend to the wounded, rebuild, and then figure out how you are going to pay for it. Later today Congress will continue funding the work of relief and recovery for Hurricane Katrina, and well we should, by speeding more than \$50 billion to FEMA and other agencies.

But as we tend to the wounded, as we begin to rebuild, let us also do what every other American family would do in like circumstances and expects this Congress to do: let us figure out how we are going to pay for it.

Congress must ensure that a catastrophe of nature does not become a catastrophe of debt for our children and grandchildren.

HURRICANE KATRINA

(Mr. INSLEE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. INSLEE. Mr. Speaker, last weekend I went to the floor of the Astrodome to work with some of the evacuees. I have never been so inspired by people of courage and grace and great dignity.

On the way home on the flight from Houston to DC, there were 10 evacuees headed for Florida. In the middle of the flight, a young man took out a razor